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**IONA: Ascent Technology Deploys IONA Technologies' Orbix in Airline
Decision Support System**

May 04, 1998

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 4, 1998--Ascent Technology, a leading provider of resource scheduling and allocation systems for the air transport industry, is using IONA Technologies' (NASDAQ:IONAY) Orbix family of products to implement Ascent's complex, mission-critical solutions to logistical challenges facing air transport organizations. Ascent use Orbix as the middleware infrastructure for its ARIS products which enable aircraft routing and gate information display.

Ascent's customers for these Orbix-based products include Delta Airlines, the Federal Express Corporation and Japan Airlines. With IONA Technologies' Orbix at the core of these products, Ascent can provide its customers with flexible solutions which can be easily tailored to meet specific application needs. Orbix, the world's leading object middleware product, provides a complete range of technologies for the creation of effective business solutions. Through its conformance with the Common Object Request Broker Architecture (CORBA) standard, Orbix enables organizations to make their different software and hardware systems work together as one solution.

Ascent Technology's state-of-the-art ARIS/AR product for aircraft routing consists of two modules: Display Board and Turn Generator. The Display Board provides real-time display of aircraft status information, while the Turn Generator automatically builds the turns that link flight legs together. The Turn Generator uses advanced optimization techniques to achieve the most reasonable turn times for each type of aircraft in the fleet. It also balances aircraft utilization and manages the placement of aircraft at maintenance stations to coincide with routine maintenance schedule. Another of Ascent's products, ARIS/GateView, provides real-time gate status information to administrative personnel throughout an airport. Depending on an individual user's needs, this information can be displayed either as a Gantt chart that relates flights to gates over time, or as an aerial view representation of the airport's ground operations.

According to Windler Schweer, vice president of sales at Ascent Technology, "Our ARIS products must deliver decisions that our airline and airport customers can trust one hundred percent of the time. In turn, we need to build our products on a platform we can trust one hundred percent of the time to support robust, scaleable and secure systems for our customers. This is why we use Orbix; we believe it is superior to all of its competitors."

"Air transportation managers in many of the world's leading airlines and airport authorities are now streamlining their operations by using decision support systems based on optimization techniques." commented Kieron Branagan, director of business development, Airline and Travel Industry Group at IONA Technologies. "Ascent Technology recognized that in order to build advanced decision support systems,

it was imperative to select an architecture in which information could be obtained from a diverse range of computing environments and be processed in a consistent and seamless manner. We are pleased to announce that Ascent selected CORBA and the industry's leading implementation, Orbix."

Ascent offers an integrated suite of software solutions that focus on the resource planning, allocation and management needs of the medium- to large-scale airports.

For over 11 years Ascent has been helping airports around the world increase the efficiency and reduce the cost of managing time-critical activities such as gate assignment, ramp equipment allocation and airside personnel scheduling. Our field-proven ARIS software is used for both long range planning and real-time response to unplanned events, and is unmatched in its ability to provide operations personnel with decisions they can trust 100% of the time.

IONA Technologies' internal Airline and Travel Industry Group was formed to ensure the widespread deployment of distributed object technology. The Group manages the growing need for CORBA in the development of mission-critical systems throughout this dynamic industry.

Founded in 1991, IONA Technologies (NASDAQ:IONAY) is in the business of Making Software Work Together(tm). IONA's leading product, Orbix(r), provides customers with a standards based enterprise middleware solution to make diverse software components work together in a reliable, dependable and scaleable manner. According to IDC's market research, Orbix, which is used by over 3,500 businesses worldwide and conforms to the Object Management Group's CORBA specification, is the world's leading object middleware product. For more information visit: <http://www.iona.com>

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T S4/FULL/5

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'Being last is not always the worst thing'

Flint, Perry

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ABSTRACT: Delta Airlines has exploited the challenges posed by the millennium bug to overhaul its obsolete IT infrastructure with leading-edge technology that will help achieve operational excellence, give a big boost to customer service and even contribute to revenue performance. The Airport Customer Service Gate and Boarding project is being rolled out to Delta's top 26 airports this year and will be in place throughout its domestic network within the next 18-24 months. The gate and boarding project, which includes new computer systems and software, boarding documentation and procedures, is the cornerstone of the airline's ongoing Airport Renewal program to modernize and standardized Delta's ancient airport technology and physical plant.

TEXT: Headnote:

The millennium bug forced Delta to take a hard look at its IT shortcomings; now it's on the leading edge of airport customer service technology

In crisis lies opportunity. For Delta Air Lines that old cliché has real meaning: The airline has exploited the challenges posed by the millennium bug to overhaul its obsolete IT infrastructure with leading-edge technology that will help achieve operational excellence, give a big boost to customer service and even contribute to revenue performance.

The secret weapon? The Airport Customer Service Gate and Boarding project, which is being rolled out to Delta's top 26 airports this year and will be in place throughout its domestic network within the next 18-24 months.

"The Y2K thing really spawned a lot of this because we had to go out to the airports and get a lot of the junk out of there," agrees CIO Charles Feld. "Being last with technology is not always the worst thing that can happen to you." Feld, who manages the airline's wholly owned Delta Technology subsidiary (formerly Transquest) and its 2,500 employees, was lured to Delta in 1997 after a successful career at Frito Lay and Burlington Northern by Delta Chairman Gerald Grinstein, who knew Feld from his days at the railroad.

The gate and boarding project, which includes new computer systems and software, boarding documentation and procedures, is the cornerstone of the airline's ongoing Airport Renewal program to modernize and standardize Delta's ancient airport technology and physical plant.

The system provides gate agents with real-time information about the flight they are handling, including the status of connecting passengers. It updates seat availability on a graphical cabin display, identifies high-value customers by name and frequent-flier award level, and refreshes as check-in, seat availability, upgrade status and connecting-flight information changes. At a glance, a gate agent can tell whether a passenger is at the airport and checked in or needs to be rebooked on a later departure.

"It will absolutely let us know whether you are likely to make the flight," says Executive VP-Customer Service Vicki Escarra. "It sounds like a simple

thing. It's huge as far as service goes. It allows us to continue to run our operation with a major focus on on-time performance."

All of the **information** is presented in a user-friendly Windows NT environment on Hewlett-Packard hardware. Agents no longer have to memorize and enter complex alphanumeric codes to begin their passenger and flight processing; it's all right there in front of them and easily accessible via a point-and-click interface. Not only is the system simpler but it greatly enhances Delta's ability to recognize and reward its best customers or those needing extra attention.

(Table Omitted)

Captioned as: Delta **gate** agents at a glance can check the status of inbound flights and connecting passengers.

(Illustration Omitted)

"The beauty of it is that we can go and get a name—if you are a platinum medallion or an elderly person or an unaccompanied minor we will be able to [identify you and] have one of our agents meet you," Escarra says. Lists of connecting passengers can be reviewed and passengers who missed the first leg of their trip identified so that their **seats** can be released to **standby** passengers in a timely fashion. Escarra tells ATW that tests have demonstrated as much as a 30% reduction in boarding time.

A key is the use of barcode-scanning **gate** readers that also have a magstrip reader backup. At the boarding **gate** enplaning travelers pass their boarding cards under the scanner, which instantly captures the data from the card including name, frequent-flier status, **seat** number and other **information**. This becomes part of the flight arrival and departure database, so **gate** agents know on a real-time basis which **seats** are filled and which customers are onboard.

Because the system is tied to Delta's customer database, "it really becomes a customercentric system," says Feld. "Not only do I know the connecting flights but I know the names of the people who are on those flights. I know what **gate** they're coming into, I know where they're going. I could also know that on your last Delta flight we lost your bags, and I could amaze you by apologizing for it and giving you a free **upgrade**."

The system's greatest value, Feld and Escarra agree, will be during irregular operations. "When things go wrong, people want to be handled especially well," notes Escarra.

When Delta began the **gate** and boarding project 18 months ago, it brought together a team of airport customer service agents to help design the system with their needs in mind. One result is the graphically represented aircraft cabin on the computer monitor that refreshes itself as customers board the aircraft. It is a modern version of the plastic **seating** charts and sticky pads that agents used for decades. Delta's agents "really liked it when they had the sticky pads," says Feld.

The new system also reflects Delta's effort to integrate its vast customer databases. "You want to capture all the **information** about your best customers in a database that is uniform across the travel ribbon," explains Senior VP-Sales and Distribution Vince Caminiti. "The key to doing that is to have the platforms at the airports, in reservations and in your online systems all be the same."

Escarra brags that, "We are the only airline today that is developing technology around process, versus function. What that means is we have been planning and changing our technology around the customers, instead of the systems being functionally focused around reservations, airports and the Internet."

Feld adds, "If you think outward from the organizational functions, you're thinking about planes, flight attendants, food, bags, because that's how we're structured internally. But when you take an external view and say, 'the customer experience,' now you've cut across all that.

"And the beauty of it is that our people at the airport want to service people, they just don't have the **information** ." They do now.

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Delta Air Lines Inc (DUNS:00-692-4872 TICKER:DAL)

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Set	Items	Description
S1	32	GATE(W) INFORMATION AND SEAT? AND STANDBY AND UPGRADE AND D- ISPLAY
S2	25	RD (unique items)
S3	107	GATE? AND INFORMATION AND SEAT? AND STANDBY AND UPGRADE AND DISPLAY
S4	88	RD (unique items)
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Set	Items	Description
S1	0	TRANSQUEST AND GATE (W) INFORMATION (W) DISPLAY
S2	78	GATE (W) INFORMATION (W) DISPLAY AND STANDBY
S3	48	RD (unique items)
S4	212	GATE (W) INFORMATION (W) DISPLAY
S5	118	RD (unique items)
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